

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strike through~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

1. (currently amended) A method of providing points based on a retrieval of keywords, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

presenting keywords to a first user through a network, and storing keywords selected by the user into a user-by-keyword management table relating to the user;

presenting keywords to an advertiser through the network, and storing keywords selected by the advertiser into an advertiser-by-keyword management table relating to the advertiser;

searching the user-by-keyword management table and the advertiser-by-keyword management table for keywords when there has been a request for retrieving the keywords from a second user different from the first user through the network, and when the requested keywords have been registered both in the user-by-keyword management table and the advertiser-by-keyword management table, posting a retrieved result of the keywords and advertisement of the corresponding advertiser to the second user through the network; and

giving points to the first user when the second user has referred to the advertisement, and storing these points into a user's-point management table relating to the first user.

2. (original) The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the points gained by the users are exchanged for a product or a service.

3. (original) The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the points consist of user points that are generated when the other users have retrieved the user-obtained keywords and advertiser points that are generated when the other users have referred to the advertisement.

4. (original) The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the selection of the keywords is free of charge, and the users can select the free keywords at the time of making a contract on the utilization of a network service.

5. (original) The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the selection of the keywords is charged, and purchase prices of the charged keywords are determined based on a past record of retrieval of the keywords by the other users.

6. (original) The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the keywords selected by the users include charged keywords and free keywords, and charged keyword of which retrieval record by the other users is low are converted to free keywords, and free keywords of which retrieval record by the other users is high are converted to charged keywords.

7. (original) The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the keywords selected by the advertisers include charged keywords and free keywords, and the advertisers can select the free keywords only after the advertisers have selected the charged keywords.

8. (original) The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the users who have registered the keywords can select a display on the Web or a transmission by e-mail as a method of presenting the advertisement to the other users.

9. (currently amended) A method of providing points comprising ~~the steps of:~~
obtaining keywords that a user can obtain from a server through a network, and displaying the obtained keywords at a user's terminal;
transmitting keywords that the user has selected from the user's terminal to the server;
presenting results of retrieval by other user together with advertisement of advertisers corresponding to the keywords registered in the server to the other user, when an another user different from the above user has retrieved the keywords through the network; and
giving points to the user who has obtained the keywords, when the other user has referred to the advertisement.

10. (currently amended) A method of providing points comprising ~~the steps of:~~
obtaining keywords that an advertiser can obtain from a server through a network, and displaying the obtained keywords at advertiser's terminal;
transmitting keywords that the advertiser has selected from the advertiser's terminal to the server;

presenting results of retrieval of keywords by user together with advertisement of the advertiser to the user, when the user has retrieved the keywords; and

giving points to an another user who has obtained the keywords stored in the server, when the user who has retrieved the keywords have referred to the advertisement.

11. (currently amended) A method of providing points based on a retrieval of keywords, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

displaying retrieved results of keywords together with advertisement of advertiser corresponding to the keywords at user's terminal, when the user has retrieved the keywords from the user's terminal through a network; and

giving points to an another user who has selected the keywords, when the keyword-retrieved user has referred to the displayed advertisement.

12. (original) An apparatus for providing points, said apparatus comprising:

a user-selected keyword storing unit which stores keywords that a user has selected through a network, relating to the user;

an advertiser-selected keyword storing unit which stores keywords that an advertiser has selected through the network, relating to the advertiser;

an advertiser-retrieving unit which retrieves an advertiser corresponding to keywords by referring to an advertiser-by-keyword management table, when an another user different from the user who has retrieved through the network the keywords that have been registered in both a user-by-keyword management table and the advertiser-by-keyword management table;

a transmitting unit which transmits the retrieved results together with advertisement of the advertiser to the another user;

a user retrieving unit which retrieves the user corresponding to the keywords by referring to the user-by-keyword management table, when the another user has referred to the advertisement;

point allocating unit which gives points to the user who has obtained the keyword; and

point registering unit which registers the points by relating the points to the user.

13. (currently amended) A computer readable medium for storing instructions, which when executed on a computer, causes the computer to perform a method of providing points based on a retrieval of keywords, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

presenting keywords to a first user through a network, and storing keywords selected by

the user into a user-by-keyword management table relating to the user;

presenting keywords to an advertiser through the network, and storing keywords selected by the advertiser into an advertiser-by-keyword management table relating to the advertiser;

searching the user-by-keyword management table and the advertiser-by-keyword management table for keywords when there has been a request for retrieving the keywords from a second user different from the first user through the network, and when the requested keywords have been registered both in the user-by-keyword management table and the advertiser-by-keyword management table, posting a retrieved result of the keywords and advertisement of the corresponding advertiser to the second user through the network; and

giving points to the first user when the second user has referred to the advertisement, and storing these points into a user's-point management table relating to the first user.

14. (currently amended) A computer readable medium for storing instructions, which when executed on a computer, causes the computer to perform a method of providing points, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

obtaining keywords that a user can obtain from a server through a network, and displaying the obtained keywords at a user's terminal;

transmitting keywords that the user has selected from the user's terminal to the server;

presenting results of retrieval by other user together with advertisement of advertisers corresponding to the keywords registered in the server to the other user, when an another user different from the above user has retrieved the keywords through the network; and

giving points to the user who has obtained the keywords, when the other user has referred to the advertisement.

15. (currently amended) A computer readable medium for storing instructions, which when executed on a computer, causes the computer to perform a method of providing points, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

obtaining keywords that an advertiser can obtain from a server through a network, and displaying the obtained keywords at advertiser's terminal;

transmitting keywords that the advertiser has selected from the advertiser's terminal to the server;

presenting results of retrieval of keywords by user together with advertisement of the advertiser to the user, when the user has retrieved the keywords; and

giving points to an another user who has obtained the keywords stored in the server,

when the user who has retrieved the keywords have referred to the advertisement.

16. (currently amended) A computer readable medium for storing instructions, which when executed on a computer, causes the computer to perform a method of providing points based on a retrieval of keywords, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

displaying retrieved results of keywords together with advertisement of advertiser corresponding to the keywords at user's terminal, when the user has retrieved the keywords from the user's terminal through a network; and

giving points to an another user who has selected the keywords, when the keyword-retrieved user has referred to the displayed advertisement.

17. (currently amended) A computer program for causing the computer to perform a method of providing points based on a retrieval of keywords, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

presenting keywords to a first user through a network, and storing keywords selected by the user into a user-by-keyword management table relating to the user;

presenting keywords to an advertiser through the network, and storing keywords selected by the advertiser into an advertiser-by-keyword management table relating to the advertiser;

searching the user-by-keyword management table and the advertiser-by-keyword management table for keywords when there has been a request for retrieving the keywords from a second user different from the first user through the network, and when the requested keywords have been registered both in the user-by-keyword management table and the advertiser-by-keyword management table, posting a retrieved result of the keywords and advertisement of the corresponding advertiser to the second user through the network; and

giving points to the first user when the second user has referred to the advertisement, and storing these points into a user's-point management table relating to the first user.

18. (currently amended) A computer program for causing the computer to perform a method of providing points, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

obtaining keywords that a user can obtain from a server through a network, and displaying the obtained keywords at a user's terminal;

transmitting keywords that the user has selected from the user's terminal to the server;

presenting results of retrieval by other user together with advertisement of advertisers corresponding to the keywords registered in the server to the other user, when an another user

different from the above user has retrieved the keywords through the network; and
giving points to the user who has obtained the keywords, when the other user has referred to the advertisement.

19. (currently amended) A computer program for causing the computer to perform a method of providing points, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

obtaining keywords that an advertiser can obtain from a server through a network, and displaying the obtained keywords at advertiser's terminal;

transmitting keywords that the advertiser has selected from the advertiser's terminal to the server;

presenting results of retrieval of keywords by user together with advertisement of the advertiser to the user, when the user has retrieved the keywords; and

giving points to an another user who has obtained the keywords stored in the server, when the user who has retrieved the keywords have referred to the advertisement.

20. (currently amended) A computer program for causing the computer to perform a method of providing points based on a retrieval of keywords, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

displaying retrieved results of keywords together with advertisement of advertiser corresponding to the keywords at user's terminal, when the user has retrieved the keywords from the user's terminal through a network; and

giving points to an another user who has selected the keywords, when the keyword-retrieved user has referred to the displayed advertisement.

21. (new) A method for conducting charged-keyword selling to advertisers, comprising:

retrieving keywords for which registration of advertisers is possible;

disclosing the keywords as a list of charged keywords;

allowing the advertisers to select optional charged keywords from the list of the charged keywords and to apply for the registration of the charged keywords;

setting content of contracts made by the advertisers and a provider of the method; and

receiving advertising data corresponding to the charged keywords from the advertisers.

22. (new) A method for providing points based on a retrieval of keywords, comprising:
providing information to a first user responsive to selection of keywords; and
assigning at least one point to a second user when the information was provided
responsive to a keyword search created by the second user.